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**Committee for Programme and Coordination**
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**Draft report**

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**Addendum**

## Programme questions: evaluation (item 4 (e))

### Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-fifth session on the evaluation of the programme on environment

1. At its 5th and 10th meetings, on 2 and 5 June 1998, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-fifth session on the evaluation of the programme on environment, transmitted to it under cover of a note by the Secretary-General stating his concurrence with the recommendations contained in the report (E/AC.51/1998/5)

**Discussion**

2. In relation to paragraph 2 of the note by the Secretary-General, the view was expressed that this report, being a follow-up report that does not address the entire United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) mandate, especially in the integration of trade, environment and development, cannot provide an input to the report that will be submitted to the General Assembly on the strengthening of United Nations activities in the area of environment.

3. The report was found to provide an informative review of progress made by UNEP in implementing the recommendations made by the Committee. It was observed that the reduction in resources during the period reviewed and managerial difficulties contributed

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to the lack of implementation of a number of recommendations. It was felt that the reduction in the appropriations for UNEP under the regular budget had led to the non-implementation of some of its activities. Paragraph 124 of the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution S/19-2 of 8 June 1997 in which it was stated that a revitalized UNEP should be supported by adequate, stable and predictable funding, was recalled. It was reaffirmed that the mandate of UNEP derived from Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and the revitalization of this mandate both by the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme of February 1997[1] and the outcome of the nineteenth special session on the review of the implementation of Agenda 21. Paragraph 123 of the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, in which it was stated that UNEP was the principal United Nations body in the field of environment, was recalled. Confidence was expressed that the reform proposals of the new Executive Director, presented to the UNEP Governing Council at its fifth special session, in May 1998, would also contribute to the revitalization and strengthening of UNEP. It was noted that the Council had decided that UNEP should give priority, in the short and medium term, to: (a) environmental assessment, (b) coordination of environmental conventions, (c) freshwater, (d) technology transfer and industry and (e) support to Africa. It was observed that the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-fifth session should be implemented in that context.

4. It was stated that there was a need to reorient the coordination of the activities of the United Nations system on environment, an issue addressed in recommendation 2 of the in-depth evaluation of the United Nations programme on environment (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1). It was stated that UNEP should participate more fully in the system-wide coordination taking place under the Administrative Committee on Coordination. With respect to paragraph 10 of the triennial review, the view was expressed that UNEP had adequately implemented recommendation 2 and that it should continue to observe its role in promoting the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda (see resolution S/19-2, annex, para. 123).

5. In the context of the importance of work done in the field of freshwater, referred to in the triennial review in relation to recommendation 3 of the in-depth evaluation, it was recalled that UNEP had been called upon to intensify its work in this field. There was a call made for UNEP to intensify its work in the field of freshwater in line with the decisions made at the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on freshwater, held in New York from 20 April to 1 May 1998. It was observed, however, that UNEP should concentrate strictly on environmental matters. Work in other fields, such as political and legal fields, should be conducted in other forums, as was in line with resolutions adopted at the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. With regard to the view expressed in paragraph 12 of the triennial review that strengthening UNEP action in some areas would not necessitate building strong in-house capacity, the view was expressed that internal scientific capacity is of particular importance to UNEP in view of its role in coordinating environmental activities in the United Nations system, based on its comparative advantage and scientific and technical expertise, as envisaged in paragraph 3 (d) of the Nairobi Declaration.[1] On the recommendation for the allocation of funds from the Environment Fund to other organizations, and the issue of funding in paragraph 31 of the triennial review, the view was expressed that in the light of the reductions in funds available to UNEP, the Environment Fund should be used for the implementation of UNEP activities, as was decided in paragraph 7 of the Nairobi Declaration, which affirmed the central importance of the Environment Fund as the principal source of financing for the

implementation of the programme of UNEP. The view was expressed that the reallocation of a 20 per cent budget line should be done in consultation with the Governing Council of UNEP and not with the institutions concerned.

6. The importance of environmental assessment was noted, including monitoring to facilitate response to environmental emergencies, an issue addressed in several recommendations of the in-depth evaluation. UNEP was strongly encouraged to work in collaboration with other organizations to gather environmental information.

7. Views were expressed that, as recommended in recommendations 7, 8 and 9 of the in-depth evaluation, the role of Earthwatch should not be enhanced, rather it should function in collaboration with UNEP's own network and Environment and Natural Resource Information Networks (ENRIN).

8. Regarding the work on indicators addressed in recommendation 9 of the in-depth evaluation, it was observed that this work should take into account the views of the developing countries. The extensive work done by other organizations on environmental indicators, including that of the World Bank, was noted, and UNEP was encouraged to work with others in this area. It was observed that UNEP should develop its own indicators to be examined by the Governing Council and then submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration.

9. With respect to recommendations 10 and 12 of the in-depth evaluation, it was recalled that in paragraph 119 of the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 it was observed that institutional arrangements for the convention secretariats should ensure the appropriate autonomy necessary for them to be efficient at their respective locations, and in paragraph 123 it was stated that UNEP should strive to promote the effective implementation of those conventions in a manner consistent with the provisions of the conventions and the decisions of the conferences of the parties.

10. It was observed that UNEP had facilitated the exchange of information within the scientific community, but that it was important, at this stage, to pay adequate attention to the information needs of the decision makers, as recommended in recommendation 18 of the in-depth evaluation. In this context, the role of UNEP as an effective link between the scientific community and policy makers at the national and international levels (see para. 3 (e) of the Nairobi Declaration) was recalled.

11. The view was expressed that the matter of fund-raising addressed in recommendation 22 of the in-depth evaluation, including the mobilization of new and additional resources, was of the utmost importance. It was suggested that management costs of UNEP should be reduced in favour of programme funding.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

12. The Committee was of the view that UNEP should fully implement the recommendations contained in the in-depth evaluation.

13. The Committee recommended to the General Assembly that the triennial review be forwarded to the Governing Council of UNEP for its consideration.

*Notes*

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Supplement No. 25 (A/52/25)*, annex, resolution 19/1, annex.